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AN EXCEPTIONAL AND MAGNIFICENT BRONZE ALLOY FIGURE OF PRAJNAPARAMITA

Prajinaparamita, Alchi and Kashmir

On the cultural Background of a Unique Bronze

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Rarely have I been more excited when seeing a picture of an artwork, as in the case of this unique bronze sculpture (Figure 1). To me its appearance confirms a research question I set out to explore at the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies conference in Chicago in 2015, namely that there must be a corpus of bronze sculptures attributable to 12th and early 13th century Kashmir. But not only that, like a piece crucial in revealing the actual content of the puzzle it fills a gap in our knowledge that is highly relevant in a number of ways. In the following I will focus on some of the most important aspects that set this bronze into its religious, historical and cultural context.

Figure 1: Six-armed goddess Prajñāpāramitā; H: 19 cm, W: 10.5 cm. D: 5 cm.

Figure 2: Detail of the six-armed goddess Prajñāpāramitā in Figure 1.

I will begin this discussion with the identification of the depicted goddess, and then discuss her depiction in detail through comparisons. These establish the strong link of this bronze to murals and sculptures of Alchi monastery, Ladakh, in particular the Alchi Sumtsek. Therefore, the date of the Alchi Sumtsek is crucial in establishing the date of the bronze, and I will review the arguments for its date. Further, I will link the bronze to a group of late Buddhist bronze sculpture from Kashmir that in scholarly literature does not yet exist. Finally, I will look at some of the details of the bronze to establish in how much it reflects the the art of the Alchi group of monuments and how it compares to other works attributed to Kashmir.

Before doing so, it needs to be noted that the present gilding of the bronze is not original to it. As an observation of the bronze revealed, it is done in cold gold on black lacquer, and its addition certainly obscures some of the finer details of the small and complex bronze. Even though the gilding appears different at some places, it probably was only

gilded once, the alterations due to the fact that the gilding could only be polished on flat surfaces and to wear at the more exposed parts of the bronze. It is beyond my expertise to judge when this gilding has been done, but it is likely that it happened in China after the piece reached there.

Identification

The goddess is six-armed, with her main hands performing the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā). Her other two right hands hold a string of beads (mālā) and perform the gesture of giving (varadamudrā), while her left hands hold attributes (Figure 2). The object held in the back arm of this side is puzzling at first glance, but a comparison to a painting of the same goddess (Figure 3), to which I come back below, reveals quite a different, more obvious shape. It can be identified as the triple jewel (triratna) symbolizing the Buddha, his teaching and the monastic community.

Indeed, the triratna can occur in quite abstracted shapes in the Alchi murals, the one depicted in Figure 4 is from a Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramañjuśrī mandala in the Alchi Dukhang, the earliest temple preserved at the site. There, it is one of the Seven Jewels of a King, which are represented in the periphery of the central mandala palace.

We can leave it at that for the moment and move on the to the last attribute, which is again easier to recognize. It is not the wide blossoming flower in the foreground that faces the viewer, but the book that lies on top of it. [1] In the representation the book quite clearly is made up of two covers enclosing a stack of leaves and bound together by two strings.

To identify the goddess, we continue to compare her to depictions of similar goddesses at Alchi. A similar six-armed goddess occurs in a number of representations within a more or less clearly established context. In the earliest monument of

Figure 3: A comparable six-armed goddess, Alchi, Small Chörten, ca. 1220; photo J. Poncar.

Figure 4: Triple Jewel (triratna), Alchi Dukhang, left side wall, Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramañjuśr ī mandala; photo J. Poncar.

Figure 5: Centre of the Prajñāpāramitā Mandala in the Alchi Dukhang, entry wall, late 12th century; photo J. Poncar.

Alchi, the Dukhang, a six-armed goddess presides the mandala on the entry wall to the left of the entrance (Figure 5)[2]. In it she presides over Buddhas in monastic robes, clearly signifying her as the "mother of the Buddhas", an epithet most frequently applied to the goddess as Prajñāpāramitā, the Perfection of Wisdom. In this depiction the goddess holds the same attributes as in the bronze, except for the right hands, which hold a book and a flask respectively. In the corners around the central circle are four medallions with the triple jewel in a similar shape as in Figure 4.

In the Alchi Sumtsek, the six-armed goddess is found twice among the mandalas in the lantern. In a unique mandala dedicated to her, she presides over manifestations of herself in the colours of the five esoteric Buddhas with the Buddhas in monastic robes depicted in the intermediate directions as their spouses. [4] Nevertheless, in structure, this mandala compares well to the one in the Dukhang, but the central goddess is of slightly different iconography. Instead of the flask she holds a lotus stem in her lower right hand, its blossom supporting a triple jewel (Figure 6). Despite the prominence given to the goddess in the mandala, the placement of the mandala on the right side wall of the lantern indicates that it is of lesser importance than the other two mandalas on this floor.

Directly opposite on the left side wall is another mandala featuring the six-armed goddess, but now in a secondary position immediately underneath the crowned Buddha in monastic robes who presides the mandala.[5] The goddess here complements the central Buddha as his wisdom aspect. This is theṣākyasiṣha mandala deriving from the Durgatipari ś odhana tantra, and the goddess is not commonly depicted in this mandala.[6]

Further in the courtyard of the Alchi Dukhang we find another similar goddess.[7] She now holds the

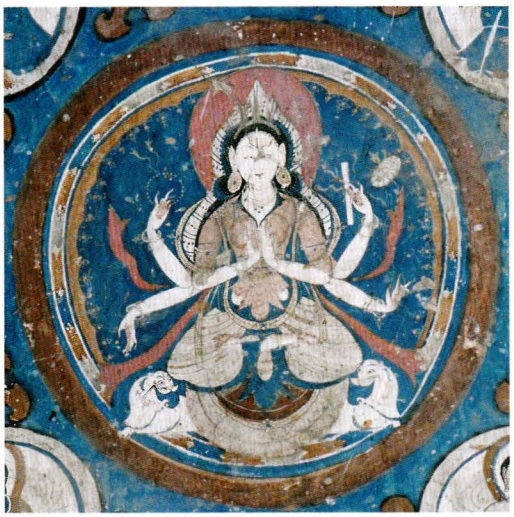

Figure 6: Central goddess of the Prajñāpāramitā mandala in the lantern of the Alchi Sumtsek, early 13th century; photo J. Poncar.

Figure 7: Seventeen-deity mandala of Prajñāpāramitā, Alchi, Small Chörten, ca. 1220; photo C. Luczanits.

Figure 8: Six-armed Green Tārā, left wall of the Avalokiteśvara niche of the Alchi Sumtsek, early 13th century; photo J. Poncar.

triple jewel in her top right hand and also her lotus is topped by such a jewel. These last two depictions indicate a certain fluidity in the representation of this goddess even within a relatively narrow cultural, spatial and temporal context, at least in what I would call her minor attributes.

None of the examples shown so far provides a fully satisfying comparison to the bronze goddess. There is, however, one more version of her mandala at Alchi, namely in the Small Chörten just in front of the Sumtsek (Figure 7). In this depiction the central goddess (Figure 3) fully conforms to the bronze—provided we accept that it is indeed a triple jewel that is depicted in the bronze and that the book was depicted on top of the lotus before the murals were damaged in this area. One may even see the bottom edge of the book in the middle of the blossom. That this mandala again depicts Prajñāpāramitā can be concluded from her context, as she again presides the five esoteric Buddhas, but now in their divine or saṃbhogakāya form.

Figure 9: Prajñāpāramitā; Gilgit (Palola ṣāhi) Pakistan; early 7th century; copper alloy with silver and copper inlay; H 41 cm x W 15 cm x D 10 cm; private collection; photo C. Luczanits 2005 (D2824).

One may add a word of caution at this point, namely that it has been surmised that at Alchi the distinctions between Prajñāpāramitā and Tārā are at times blurred because they both are depicted with a book. [8] In addition, Tārā, too, is occasionally called a "mother of all Buddhas", but I do not know of a mandala or mandala assembly of her in which she is surrounded by Buddhas. Indeed, the famous Green Tārā in the Avalokiteśvara niche of the Alchi Sumtsek holds a book in her upper left hand (Figure 8), but the absence of the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā), her colour and association with Buddha Amoghasiddhi represented above her, and some distinctive attributes for compassion deities, such as the stick with three branches at its side (tridaṇḍa) in her upper right hand and the flask in her lower left hand, clearly identify her as Green Tārā.

For other forms of the six-armed goddess, the distinction is less clear, at least at first glance. For example, a representation of Prajñāpāramitā on the gallery level or first floor of the Sumtsek shows her white and performing the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā). [9]However, like Tārā she holds a staff in the upper right hand—but it is not a tridaṇḍa—and a flask in the lower left. In my opinion, this sharing or exchange of attributes between the two goddesses may well explain some of the multiple-armed forms of the goddesses, but it is not an indication that the two goddesses became synonymous, or that we have syncretic images here, as fundamental distinctions between them are retained. In Alchi Prajñāpāramitā is a white goddess performing the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā) presiding Buddhas, while Tārā is predominantly depicted in one of her green forms and does not teach. In the case of this last example from the Alchi monuments, the context also refers to Prajñāpāramitā as she is depicted directly above a row of five Buddhas.

Thus, from the comparisons to the murals of Alchi monastery, Ladakh, the bronze goddess can be identified as representing Prajñāpāramitā, the Perfection of Wisdom. She is both the personification of this perfection and the personification of the entire literature bearing her name.

Prajñāpāramitā

While the six-armed form of Prajñāpāramitā occurs in abundance at Alchi she is actually rare. To demonstrate this, I next provide a short overview of the different forms of Prajñāpāramitā in the wider western Himalayan region.

Probably her earliest image known to date is a unique standing image of Prajñāpāramitā sold at Sotheby's in New York in 2005, which by inscription can be associated with the Buddhist kingdom of the Palola Ṣāhi at Gilgit, that is along the present day Karakorum Highway (Figure 9).[10] Even though she also has the character of a royal portrait, an inscribed open book she holds in the left hand identifies her without doubt as a representation of the goddess. The bronze is further identified as "the pious gift of the Paramadevī Śrī Maṅgalahaṃsikā", the wife of the second of the known Palola Śāhi kings, Vajrādityanandi, which attributes the bronze to the early 7th century, and makes it one of the earliest bronzes known from this dynasty. With her right hand, the goddess quite fittingly performs a gesture of conversation, but her identifying attribute is the book. Another rare early bronze of the goddess, attributed by von Schroeder to the Zhang Zhung kingdom and the 8th century, replicates this iconography, but here the goddess performs the gesture of reassurance (abhayamudrā).[11]

Prajñāpāramitā has numerous slightly different forms recorded in Indian iconographic literature.[12] Usually the goddess is described as yellow, but white forms also occur. She is described either as two- or four-armed and in most cases her main arms perform the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā). Additional characteristics for the four-armed form are the gesture of reassurance (abhayamudrā) and a jewel besides the book.

Depictions are more varied, but the two- and four-armed forms are clearly the most frequent.[13] For example, a Kashmiri bronze of the goddess today in the British Museum shows her teaching

Figure 10: Two-armed Prajñāpāramitā; Kashmir; 11th century; copper alloy with silver inlay; British Museum, Brooke Sewell Permanent Fund, no. 1966,0616.2.

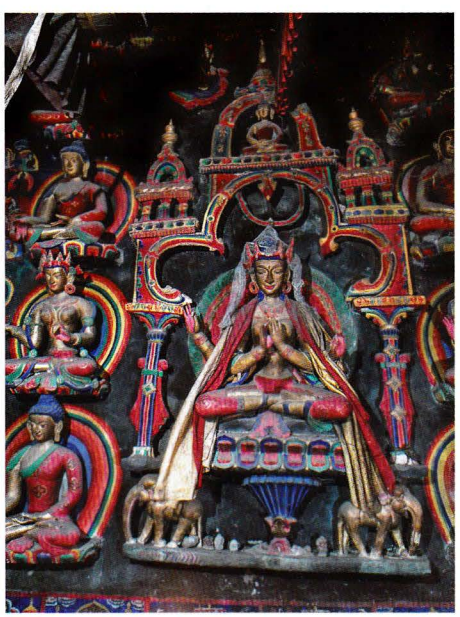

Figure 11: Four-armed Prajñāpāramitā, Lalung Serkhang, right side wall; second half of the 12th century; photo J. Poncar 1992.

and with additional lotuses at the sides, one of them holding the book attribute (Figure 10).[14] The two-armed teaching Prajñāpāramitā, with and without the book on the lotus to its side, is also found frequently in Northeast Indian book illuminations, in which she is usually yellow.[15] It is on the basis of such bronzes, that I identified two-armed clay images with the teaching gesture, such as the one in the Translator' s temple at Nako, in Upper Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India, as Prajñāpāramitā.[16] However, it is again more the retinue of Buddhas that identifies the goddess in this context.

Prajñāpāramitā appears to have been particularly popular across the Himalayas in the twelfth century. Then she is often four-armed, and the teaching gesture is used only occasionally, as for example on the right side wall of the wonderful temple of Lalung, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh (Figure 11). [17]Here, too, it is more the context of being surrounded by four Buddhas that identifies her as Prajñāpāramitā. The tiny image of Buddha Amitābha in the palace above her suggests a similar amount of exchange with Tārā as we noticed above for the Alchi depictions.

Other depictions do not show the goddess teaching, such as the Prajñāpāramitā of Kyangbu, a now destroyed monument founded in 1076 CE.[18] In this representation the main hands perform the gesture of reassurance (abhayamudrā) and the gesture of meditation (dhyānamudrā), while the upper hands once held vajra and book, neither of the attributes preserved. This iconography is also found on a book-cover in a private collection, which confirms her identification through the ten Buddhas flanking her. [19]The goddess may also have two hands joined in meditation.[20] However, attributes may be switched around. For example, in a bronze from northeast India documented by von Schroeder in the Potala Palace, the vajra is held in the main right hand and a string of beads (mālā) in the upper right hand, while the left

Figure 12: Four-armed Prajñāpāramitā tsha tsha; Tholing, 11th -12th century, H. 10.5 cm, private collection, photo credit

Figure 13: Six-armed Prajñāpāramitā, detail of a folio from a Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā (The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses); Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century; Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper; Illustration: 4 7/8 x 10 3/4 in. (27.3 x 12.4 cm); from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation (M.81.90.6).

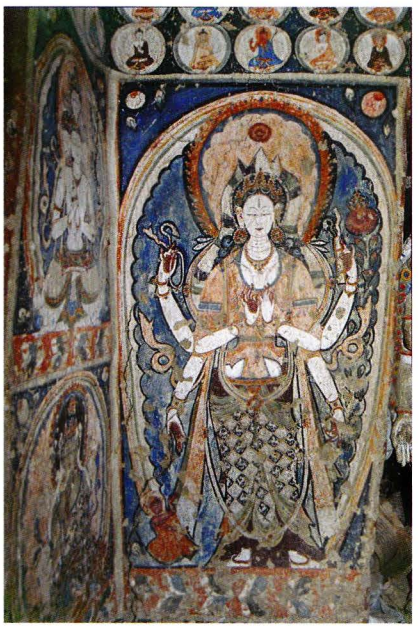

Figure 14: Standing six-armed Prajñāpāramitā, Mangyu Four-Image Chörten, early 13th century, photo C. Luczanits 1998 (113,10).

hands are identical to those of the Kyangbu image.[21] What all these forms have in common is that the book remains associated with the upper left hand. Frequent minor characteristics are her frontal depiction and sitting posture with the legs fully crossed.

Closer to the bronze image under discussion in both time and place are images of the goddess found at Tholing, West Tibet. In a tsha tsha the goddess is again four-armed (Figure 12).[22] Her right hands hold a string of beads (mālā) and perform the gesture of giving (varadamudrā), while her left hands hold the book on the lotus and an unusual ringed or dotted staff in the lower left hand.[23]

The other depiction of the goddess from Tholing is a famous manuscript illumination first published by Giuseppe Tucci in his seminal publication Tibetan Painted Scrolls and now in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Figure 13).[24] In this depiction the goddess is yellow and performs the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā) with the main arms. Her upper right hand holds a vajra, her lower right perfoms the gesture of giving (varadamudrā), her upper left hand holds the book, and the lower left a blue lily (utpala). Actually, the Tholing manuscript illumination is the only representation of the six-armed form of the goddess outside what I have called the Alchi Group of Monuments, that is the monuments of Alchi and closely related sites within a small geographic area in lower Ladakh, in particular Mangyu and Sumda.

In Mangyu, the six-armed goddess is found in the Four Image Chörten flanking the clay sculpture of Avalokiteśvara (Figure 14).[25] Iconographically, this representation is very close to the sculpture under discussion, as the triple jewel on the red lotus she holds assimilates the one represented in the bronze. Sumda Chung preserves another six-armed representation of the goddess, again holding a triple jewel in one of her left hands.[26]

This survey further supports that the bronze under discussion represents the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, and demonstrates that six-armed forms of the goddess occur only in a very restricted geographical area. The most closely related representations are found in the most recent monuments of the Alchi group. The date of this bronze, thus hinges on the date of these monuments and in particular the date of the Alchi Sumtsek.

Dating Alchi

It is now a quarter of a century ago, that Roger Goepper published his seminal article "Clues for a Dating of the Three-Storeyed Temple (Sumtsek) in Alchi, Ladakh", suggesting an early 13th century date for the temple on the basis of a then newly discovered and inscribed lineage depiction in its inaccessible lantern.[27] This representation is one of the earliest preserved lineages of the Drigung School of Tibetan Buddhism, and terminates with it's founder Drigungpa (1143–1217), whose personal name was Jigten Gönpo ('Jig rten mgon po) and who died in 1217. This lineage, thus establishes an early 13th century date for the completion of the monument.

This attribution has since remained—more or less fiercely—contested. In this regard, most arguments focus on trying to deconstruct the validity of the relevant lineage depiction or its accompanying inscriptions for the date of the Sumtsek. It is argued that the depiction and/or its accompanying captions are later additions to the monument. However, a detailed study of the depictions reveals that there is no doubt that conceptually the lineage is a late addition to the monument and that its unusual features are due to the fact that it is one of the earliest depictions of this subject preserved.[28] In addition, the original attribution of the Alchi Sumtsek to the late eleventh or early twelfth century, as proposed in the first detailed works on

the monument, [29] cannot be proven positively and is simply based on a misreading of a detail in an inscription and local tradition, which more often than not has turned out to be wrong.

As apparent from Goepper' s subsequent work [30] and several of my studies, an eleventh century date for the Alchi Sumtsek cannot be upheld for a string of further reasons, among them the depiction of the eighty-four mahāsiddha on the dress of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. One may also cite the transformation of Yoga Tantra depictions in comparison to earlier representations, the emergence of Akṣobhya as the most prominent among the five Buddhas, and the development of Drigung themes at Alchi itself[31] and in the region later in the 13th century.[32] I have also shown that an extension of the flourishing of early Western Himalayan art into the early thirteenth century also conforms to major changes in emphasis visible in the early monuments preserved in the region and the comparison to Central Tibet. [33]

We can now add the consistent and unique representation of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā as a six-armed teaching deity as presented above to these arguments, two of them found in the lantern where the Drigung lineage is depicted.

Alchi and Kashmir Art

On the other hand it is generally—and probably too much so—assumed that early western Himalayan art is fully dependent on the art of Kashmir alone. Occasionally all high quality art of the region is attributed to Kashmir craftsmanship. This is most evident when, in the absence of surviving in situ examples, illuminations of Tibetan manuscripts are used to define Kashmiri painting of the period under concern, as is the case in a relatively recent exhibition catalogue on "The Arts of Kashmir" .[34]

While I do not agree with this approach, it is clear that there must have been continues exchanges

Figure 15: Four-armed Dhanada Tārā; Kashmir or Western Himalayas, ca. 1100; Brass; the urna and the eyes inlaid with silver; H. 4 3/8 in. (11.1 cm); Solomon Family Collection, HIM-018.

Figure 16: Six-armed Sugatisandarśana Avalokiteśvara; Kashmir; late 12th to early 13th century; H. 32.5 cm; Potala Palace, Lima Lhakhang, inv. no. 367; after Ibid., no. 54A–C..

with Kashmir throughout the development of early Western Himalayan art.[35] Within the larger corpus western Himalayan art dating from the late tenth to the early thirteenth centuries, the Alchi Group of Monuments is distinct, in particular its paintings. This artistic style only occurs within a very small geographic region in Lower Ladakh in proximity to Kashmir. Thus here, too, I follow Roger Goepper in suggesting that the murals of the Alchi Sumtsek have been painted by Kashmir artists, or at least under their supervision. This is also indicated by the diverse temples depicted on the dress (dhoti) of Avalokiteśvara, which evidence a religious milieu in which Buddhism flourishes side by side with Hinduism, [36] and the extremely rich material culture depicted. A good example for the latter is the abundance of textile patterns of different origin throughout the monument. [37]

The late date of the Alchi Sumtsek and the exceptional sophistication of its murals have far reaching consequences not only for our understanding of early western Himalayan art but also for the artistic production of Kashmir. As stated in my contribution to the Collecting Kashmir catalogue, a four-armed Dhanada Tārā from a private collection (Figure 15) [38] has its direct comparison in the Alchi paintings, but this image is of much lower quality than would be expected from the quality of the murals.

Be it the Asia Society exhibition catalogue of 2007 quoted above, or the recently published study on The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir, high quality sculpture production of Kashmir appears to cease in the eleventh century. This scenario is contradicted not only by the Alchi murals, but more generally also by the history of the Kashmir region, which resisted Islamic invasion until the 13th century, and the importance of Kashmiri Buddhist teachers in Tibet in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. [39] While Kalhaṇa's Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir (Rajataraṇgiṇī) leaves no doubt of the many violent conflicts in Kashmir history including the destruction of cultural heritage, it also frequently narrates of temple foundations and donations to temples. [40] It is thus simply not possible that no high quality twelfth or thirteenth century sculptures of Kashmir have survived. But where are they and how do they look like?

When I presented on the topic of late Kashmiri bronzes in 2015, I only found a few hints in the secondary literature. The most important such hint is provided by Ulrich von Schroeder's attribution of a highly distinctive bronze of the six-armed Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to twelfth century Kashmir (Figure 16). [41] He does not provide his

Figure 17: Panel of four-armed Mañjuśrī; Alchi Sumtsek, left side wall; early 13th century; photo J. Poncar.

Figure 18: Detail of the six-armed Green Tārā; Alchi Sumtsek, left wall of the Avalokiteśvara niche; early 13th century; photo J. Poncar.

reasoning behind this attribution, but it is most probably the comparison to the Alchi paintings that led to it. [42] The bronze combines a rather rigid representation of the Bodhisattva's body with intricate and animated detail of life. Particularly noteworthy are the fine scroll details of the seat, and the animals in the throne the bodies of which appear to rub against the pillars between them.

This latter feature finds its direct comparison in the art of the Alchi group of monuments.[43] In painting it can be seen on the Mañjuśrī panels in the Sumtsek (Figure 17),[44] and in the Mañjuśrī Temple it is also found in three-dimensional form.[45] Despite their differences in size, there is also considerable overlap with our bronze, in particular in the emphasis on scroll-work, the fleshy lotus-petals, the garland falling between thigh and lower leg, and the shape of the flames along the halo's edge. The latter are an interesting detail that deserves further exploration.

The way the flames along the halo are articulated on the Avalokiteśvara bronze is rather peculiar. Examined in detail, we notice that a more complex element with three curled tongues of flames alternates with a somewhat simpler one in which one of the two branches appears to terminate in a jewel. A comparison for this feature is again found in the Alchi Sumtsek murals, most notably in the halo of the famous Green Tārā of the Avalokiteśvara niche (Figure 18). In fact, the Alchi murals show a considerable variety of such halo edges, and the representation in the clay sculptures is naturally much simpler and less distinctive, but alternating pearls are a common feature. At times, the pearls completely replace the flames, such as on the head nimbus of the Mañjuśrī panel (Figure 17) or the halo of Prajñāpāramitā in the Small Chörten (Figure 3). The Prajñāpāramitā bronze has similar flames with pearls, but less organized, in several different shapes and almost all of the points containing pearls.

Figure 19: Side view of the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā in Figure 1 showing the double earrings, the hair bun and the jewellery underneath.

Figure 20: Three quarter profile of a four-armed Green Tārā; Alchi Sumtsek, left wall of the Avalokiteśvara niche; early 13th century; photo J. Poncar.

Figure 21: Offering goddess Lāsyā; Tholing, northwestern Chörten, second quarter of the 11th century; after "Tuolin Si (Ntho-Ling Monastery)," 131..

Actually, the halos of the Avalokiteśvara and Prajñāpāramitā bronzes are not as close to the Alchi examples as are those of a select group of other bronzes. Probably the closest comparison is offered by a sculpture that depicts a form of Mahābhairavī and has an undeciphered inscription (see Fig. ### in Amy Heller's contribution). [46]This bronze is said to come from Kangra, but that does not have to be its place of origin. In the halo of this bronze a single flame alternates with a jewel. The same halo is also found on a much simpler bronze depicting the goddess Kurukullā.[47] The odd scroll at the bottom of the throne base of this bronze provides another link to to the Alchi Sumtsek paintings, where similar abstracted scrollwork is used in a number of occasions, usually in form of arches above deities. It also provides a conceptual comparison among bronzes for the scroll in the base of the Prajñāpāramitā.

These are just some hints towards a possible corpus of 12th and early 13th century Kashmiri bronzes that have not yet been identified as such. Based on the find spot of such bronzes as the one from Kangra, a considerable body of high quality bronzes that share features with the Alchi murals are attributed to Himachal Pradesh and a much earlier period. Instead, I have argued in my 2015 presentation to consider them as Kashmiri and dating to the 12th and early 13th century. These images include the Mahābhairavī of the Cleveland Museum of Art illustrated in Amy Heller's contribution (see Fig. ### in Amy Heller's contribution). It would be beside the point to replicate this argument here, but it should be clear from the above that the bronze Prajñāpāramitā has to be viewed against this background. It is now time to look at some of the details of the goddess' depiction itself and view them with their comparisons.

Figure 22: Side view of the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā in Figure 1 revealing the wreath decorating the hair.

Figure 23: Green Tārā rescuing from the eight dangers; Alchi Sumtsek, first floor, central panel of the right side wall; early 13th century; photo J. Poncar

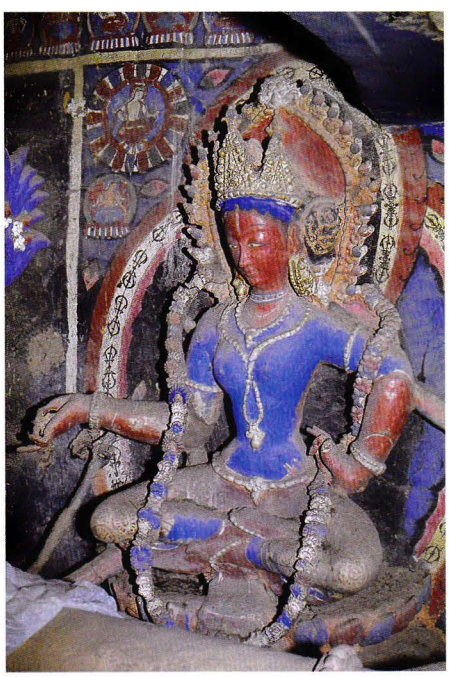

Figure 24: Upper right goddess in the Mañjuśrī niche, Alchi Sumtsek; height 90–95 cm; photo C. Luczanits 1998 (WHAV).

Bodily Features

On the bronze Prajñāpāramitā the eyes are inlayed in silver, and the vertical stroke on the forehead and possibly the lips are inlayed in copper (Figure 2). The vertical line on the forehead is a common feature of peaceful Buddhist goddesses associated with Kashmir (see Figure 15). It is also found in Alchi, where the slit is in an alternative colour and has a central dot, both in painting (Figure 3) [48] and sculpture (Figure 17).

The hair is bound to a bun on one side, which is decorated with a scroll (Figure 19). This compares well to the smaller and simpler representations of Tārā flanking the main one (Figure 20).[49] This comparison also explains the upper earring with the three pearls pending from it, which is also found on the bronze. Small rosettes above the ears, in contrast, are only found on the main Tārā of the Alchi Sumtsek (Figure 18), which also has pearl pendants underneath the bun, albeit in proportions that differ considerable from these in the bronze.

The jewellery under the hair bun derives from late tenth and early eleventh century artworks, where it is expressed much more clearly. As examples, one may cite the flanking goddesses on the Queen Diḍḍā bronze, [50] the depiction of the offering goddess Lāsyā in one of the Tholing chörten from the first half of the 11th century (Figure 21), [51] or the wooden sculpture of Charang in Kinnaur.[52] Note that the hair of these two goddesses is covered by a veil the ends of which convert into a scarf. A rather coarse version of this headdress is also found on the British Museum Prajñāpāramitā bronze (Figure 10), which also has bracelets similar to the Tholing depiction and thus likely dates to the 11th century. Further, it is noteworthy that the Tholing goddess also has an upper earring similar to that on the bronze, but simpler.

In addition to the hair bun on one side the bronze goddess has a wreath decorating the hair on the other side (Figure 22). This details reminds of the wreath surrounding the head of the goddess in some Alchi depictions, the most obvious one being the white wreath surrounding the head between the hair and the veil on the Green Tārā rescuing from the eight dangers on the first floor of the Alchi Sumtsek (Figure 23). In this respect, it is also interesting to note that the the two standing Tārā flanking he main one in the Avalokiteśvara niche of the Alchi Sumtsek also have a wreath on the right side and a heir bun on the left, the latter in Figure 20.[53]

Thus, in terms of the headdress the Prajñāpāramitā bronze reveals a stunning range of detail and combines elements that in other examples only occur separately. In the Sumtsek sculptures, it is either the wreath with two hair knots symmetrically lying on the shoulder [54] or the bun at the side that is depicted (Figure 24), [55] not both. The artist of the bronze thus attempted to incorporate as many of the conventional details as possible, and did this with great mastership and skilfully using the depth of the bronze.

One of the more puzzling elements of the Prajñāpāramitā bronze is the multi cornered veil behind the head. As we have seen, the veil is commonly related to the hair-dress and covers it from behind. Accordingly, its shape usually relates to the way the hair is bound, as also demonstrated by the Tholing manuscript representation of the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā (Figure 13). By the time of the Alchi Sumtsek depictions the veil is increasingly abstracted and follows the outline of the crown rather than that of the hair alone (Figure 23). [56]

The veil of the bronze goddess, in contrast goes beyond a mere reflection of the hair or crown and falls around the head at a regular distance (Figure 2). To a certain extent, it has its conceptual predecessor or comparison in the Tholing tsha tsha,

which emphasizes three points among them and forms a pointed curtain behind the head (Figure 12). However, the regularity of the veil on the bronze and the way that it is set off from the back makes it likely that it also serves as a second head nimbus. This is comparable to the usage of the head nimbus of the clay sculptures in the Alchi Sumtsek, which is also set off from the wall (Figure 24). In terms of shape, the veil frames the head of the goddess in a similar manner as the scalloped inner edge of the nimbus frames the head of the Alchi Tārā rescuing from the eight dangers (Figure 23).

If we compare the backs of some of the bronzes already used as comparison a similar development is visible. In the British Museum bronze of Prajñāpāramitā the veil is still clearly related to the hair (Figure 25), while on the back of the Dhanada Tārā it is more abstracted and covers much of the head, but it is still clearly outlined (Figure 26). In the Prajñāpāramitā bronze it almost covers the entire head nimbus opening, the peculiar point at the top of the opening necessitated to connect the veil to the back halo (Figure 27).

In terms of jewellery the bronze features a three pointed crown with a large jewel in front of the central point and the edges of the crown similarly structured as the flames at the edge of the halo. The S-shaped hair-locks along the forehead with a marked partition in the centre is common in both sculpture and painting. The large round earrings with a pointed ornament at the bottom are common in both media as well. All other jewellery is rather conventional, bracelets, necklace and belt also featuring a large central jewel. In the case of the belt, pendants hang from this central jewel in ways comparable to other Kashmir bronzes and the Alchi clay sculptures as well.[57] The fall of the long necklace on the bronze is obscured by the hands in front of it, and even on close observation it remained unclear if the string is twisted between the breasts as is occasionally the case at Alchi (Figure 24).

Given the comparisons to Alchi and and other Kashmir bronzes, we would expect the goddess to wear a bodice, but there is no indication for that. Also the dhoti covering her legs is practically invisible on the legs, but becomes apparent underneath them, where it' s hem projects in an unusual manner across the edge of the lotus base forming triple points in the centre of the base and to its sides. As in the case of the veil, this is an unusual element for which a direct comparison still needs to be found. Usually the cloth wraps around the knee and falls along the lower legs in a wide bow, and only the central cloth projects and terminates in a point (see, for example, Figure 24). However, there is considerable variation in this regard across the art of the western Himalayas, and both the British Museum bronze (Figure 10) and the Dhanada Tārā (Figure 15) indicate alternatives. Projecting dress edges of a different shape can also be observed on the Lalung sculptures (Figure 11).

To the sides of the body of the bronze goddess, and partially obscured by the lower arms, the ends of the veil terminate in stiff triple pointed ends (best visible on Figure 22). Here the bronze of the six-armed Avalokiteśvara offers a slightly more sophisticated comparison (Figure 16). The long garland, typical for all Kashmir related works, falls between the crossed legs and forms a wide bow in front of the double lotus.

With this review of some of the more interesting elements found with the body of the goddess we move on to the base of the sculpture, which again has some unusual features that resonate with depictions in Kashmir as well as Alchi but have no direct comparison.

Flowery Base

The goddess sits on a double lotus with fleshy,

double looped, pointed petals (Figure 28). There are two rows of overlapping petals in the upper part and three in the lower part, making the bottom wider than the top. [58] The way the petals overlap each other is the best indication that the wax model of the bronze was at least partially made with moulds, as the petals are clearly formed separately and placed on top of each other. Petals of this shape are extremely popular in the sculptures of Alchi group of monuments and they become increasingly elongated and pointed in the later monuments. For example, one of the goddesses accompanying the main image of the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Alchi Sumtsek sits on a similar base, but only its lower part is covered with petals. [59] Viewing the back of the sculpture it is remarkable that the petals of the lotus are attached to the back of the mandorla (Figure 27), indicating a certain uneasiness or improvisation necessary due to the addition of the upper petals to the seat. However, such adjustments to the throne structure is also found in the clay sculptures of Alchi, in particular in the Mañjuśrī temple.[60]

The hourglass shape of the double lotus base is repeated with the large rectangular base underneath, the front of which is covered with an extremely intricate lotus scroll motif (Figure 28). While this mirroring creates a strikingly harmonious rhythm with the bronze, the actual shape of the base and the scrolling lotus are the most surprising element of the bronze. This is even more the case when the front view is compared with the back view, which reveals the plain base (Figure 27). As surprising as the shape of the base occurs at first glance, this is mostly due to its plain surface from the back. Hourglass shaped bases are actually not that unusual in Kashmiri and western Himalayan art, but their surface is generally modelled as rocks. [61]

More unusual is the lotus that covers its front face and scrolls to its sides. Conceptually, this scroll is connected with the stem of the lotus held

Figure 25: Back of the two-armed Prajñāpāramitā of the British Museum in Figure 10: Two-armed Prajñāpāramitā; Kashmir; 11th century; copper alloy with silver inlay; British Museum, Brooke Sewell Permanent Fund, no. 1966,0616.2. Photo rights to be clarified.; photo C. Luczanits.

Figure 26: Back of four-armed Dhanada Tārā in Figure 15: Four-armed Dhanada Tārā; Kashmir or Western Himalayas, ca. 1100; Brass; the urna and the eyes inlaid with silver; H. 4 3/8 in. (11.1 cm); Solomon Family Collection, HIM-018.

Figure 27: Back of the Prajñāpāramitā bronze in Figure 1.

in the goddess' lower left hand and supporting the book to that side. However, the conceptual integration is not fully thought through, as the blossom underneath the book has the expected double looped lotus petals (best visible in Figure 19), while those flanking the centre of the base have double layers of plain petals and a peculiarly shaped stamen with an outer ring (Figure 28). The top and bottom corners of the base feature a third type of blossom with a bud in the centre that is in the process of opening up. In addition, cone shaped leaves are represented to the sides of the upper two blossom pairs. The scroll itself emerges from a pronounced stem with an omega-shaped upper part from which the subsidiary stems emerge. At its base an extremely intricate array of tiny leaves or tentacles cover the entire front surface of the base and is mirrored in its upper part.

This description gives an idea about the complexity of this base, but also its obvious composite nature. The latter is not surprising, as there is no direct comparison for it in Kashmiri bronzes or the Alchi paintings. In Kashmir bronzes scrolls are found with the halo of images, often framing secondary figures.[62] Occasionally, lotuses underneath Buddh images develop scrolls at their sides to support subsidiary stupas or figures (Figure 29).[63] In Western Himalayan art scrolls become more and more prominent over time.[64] In fact, the sculptural configurations on the main wall at Lalung and in the niches of the Alchi group of monuments all are framed by scrolls deriving from a single vase underneath the throne of Buddha Vairocana. In addition, scrolls are prominently used to fill the intermediary spaces of mandalas at in Nako and the Alchi Dukhang. However, the absence of a vase and presence of cone shaped leaves on the bronze make clear that these Kashmiri and Western Himalayan examples have not been the model for it.

As Amy Heller suggested in the workshop dedicated to this bronze, the likely model for the scroll derives from Eastern India. Also in eastern Indian bronzes scrolls emerging from a single stem are occasionally used to support images, [65] and layer with a lotus scroll may also be prominently used in stone sculpture.[66] A major difference of a number of these scrolls to the Kashmiri examples is their depth, rather than scrolling on a single plain towards the sides, in eastern Indian examples often a symmetric pair of flower buds projects from this plain towards the viewer, just as in the Prajñāpāramitā bronze.

However, the artist of the Prajñāpāramitā bronze did not simply copy from a model, but went a step further. While the central stem can at least partially be explained from other Kashmiri examples, the three-dimensionality of the scrolls and the covering of the surface with tentacles take their inspiration from East Indian examples, but have been converted in aesthetics. The scrolls themselves derive from eastern Indian examples, but on the Prajñāpāramitā lotus blossoms replace the buds. The covering of the surface of the base reflects the covering of the bases of eastern Indian bronzes, in particular those of lotus mandalas, by vegetal foliage, but the foliage on the Prajñāpāramitā is extremely fine and unique in its detailing. Interestingly, the buds at the corners of the base remind of the usage of buds on the sides of later thrones, the projecting parts of which terminate in lotus buds. Tentatively all these elements are more prominent in objects dated to the twelves century than on earlier ones.

Conclusion

To me the comparisons of both the iconography and the details of the bronze support both its attribution to Kashmir as well as its close association to the art preserved in the Alchi Group of monuments. I thus conclude, that the Prajñāpāramitā bronze has been made in Kashmir at around 1200 at the earliest. Like the Alchi group of monuments, it stands at the

end of the development of Kashmiri Buddhist art production, but also represents an apex of the regions craftsmanship at that time.

As with other possible late Kashmiri bronzes I have identified, there are a number of features for which no immediate comparison comes to mind. This is not only the case for the attribute held in the upper left hand that has been discussed in some detail, but also for other features, such as the absence of a bodice, the garment projecting underneath the legs, and the elaborate lotus base around an hour-glass shaped throne. This latter element is probably the most surprising aspect of the bronze, but technically compares well to the vegetal scroll in the seat of the six-armed Avalokiteśvara (Figure 16). As this is a painterly motive, it is surprising that it is absent in Alchi, at least in form of a direct and close comparison. However, one of the conclusions from my previous study of possible late Kashmiri bronzes was, that not all of their elements can be found as such at Alchi and that potential late Kashmiri bronzes are of a remarkable variety. In fact, none of the bronzes I have studied so far is as close to the art of the Alchi monuments as this Prajñāpāramitā bronze. The number of elements for which direct comparisons can be found far exceeds that of others, including the six-armed Avalokiteśvara mentioned above.

To me the variety of potential late Kashmiri bronze sculptures further demonstrates what is already evident from the Alchi group of monuments. Very likely there still were a number of artistic workshops active in the Kashmir valley around 1200. In this connection, it may also be relevant to note that the stylistic differences between the monuments of the Alchi group are considerably wider in sculpture than in painting.

Figure 28: Base of the Prajñāpāramitā bronze in Figure 1.

Figure 29: Buddhas of the three times flanked by Bodhisattvas and stupas; Palace Museum Beijing; after Tu Xiang Yu Feng Ge : Gu Gong Zang Chuan Fo Jiao Zao Xiang / Iconography and Styles, Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum, no. 79..

FOOTNOTES

1.Remarkably, the book lies not on the top of the lotus cushion, which faces the viewer, but above its upper petals.

2.For a depiction of the mandala see Christian Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay: Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10th to Early 13th Centuries (Chicago: Serindia, 2004), fig. 236.

3.The flask has been recorded in my notes.

4.See Roger Goepper and Jaroslav Poncar, Alchi. Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary. The Sumtsek (London: Serindia, 1996), 221.

5.See Ibid., 218.

6.For an iconographic description of this mandala see, e.g., Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tântrisme Bouddhique, Bibliothèque du Centre de Recherches sur l'Asie Centrale et la Haute Asie (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1986), 62–63.

7.Her depiction has not been published so far, but she is much less well preserved than the other ones.

8.See Robert N. Linrothe, "Mapping the Iconographic Programme of the Sumtsek," in Alchi. Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary. The Sumtsek, ed. Roger Goepper and Jaroslav Poncar, (London: Serindia, 1996).

9.See Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 168–169.

10.For more details on this bronze see Oskar von Hinüber, "Three New Bronzes From Gilgit," Annual Report of the International Research Institute of Advanced Buddhology X, (2007): 39–43, pls. 1–5 and Pratapaditya Pal, The Arts of Kashmir (Milan, New York: 5 Continents, Asia Society, 2007), fig. 98.

11.See Ulrich von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 2001), 788–789, pl. 188A–C, and Ulrich von Schroeder, 108 Buddhist Statues in Tibet : Evolution of Tibetan Sculptures, 1st ed. ed. (Chicago Hong Kong [China]: Serindia Publications Visual Dharma Publications, 2008), no. 8B, where she is identified as Prajñāpāramitā, the "Goddess of Wisdom", Zhang Zhung Kingdom; circa 8th century; brass; H. 22 cm. Po ta la: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 742.

12.For the different forms of Prajñāpāramitā as they are recorded in Indian iconographic texts, mainly the Niṣpannayogāvalī and the Sādhanamālā, see de Mallmann, Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tântrisme Bouddhique, 305–307.

13.See HAR, "Himalayan Art Resources," http://www.himalayanart.org/ (accessed May 5, 2016), in particular the outline page on Prajñāpāramitā and the pages on the different iconographic forms linked from there (http://www.himalayanart.org/pages/prajna/index.html).

14.Published in Ulrich von Schroeder, Indo-Tibetan Bronzes (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publ., 1981), no. 23A, and Chandra L. Reedy, Himalayan Bronzes: Technology, Style, and Choices (Newark - London: University of Delaware Press - Associated University Press, 1997), K84.

15.See, for example, Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch, ed., Tibet – Klöster Öffnen Ihre Schatzkammern, (Essen: Kulturstiftung Ruhr, Villa Hügel, 2006), no. 26; Eva Allinger, "A Pāla-Period Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Manuscript Distributed Between Five Collections," Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens LI, no. 2007–2008 (2008), fig. 1; Eva Allinger, "Mahāmāyūrī and Jaṅgulī as Attendants of Prajñāpāramitā. Investigations on an Unusual Iconographic Feature Based on Bihari Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Manuscripts

from the 11th Century," in Prajñādhara. Essays on Asian Art History Epigraphy and Culture in Honour of Gouriswar Bhattacharya, ed. Gerd J.R. Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji, (New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2009), Karen Weissenborn, Buchkunst Aus Nālandā: Die Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā-Handschrift in der Royal Asiatic Society / London (Ms. Hodgson 1) und ihre Stellung in der Pāla-Buchmalerei des 11./12. Jahrhunderts, 1 ed. (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, 2012), Abb. 12.

16.See Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, figs. 77, 83, 85.

17.Originally published in Ibid., fig. 99. Four armed forms with the teaching gesture (dharmacakramudrā) usually hold a string of beads (mālā) and a book in the hands at the sides, see for example Amy Heller, Hidden Treasures of the Himalayas: Tibetan Manuscripts, Paintings and Sculptures of Dolpo (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2009), 76, 123, 125, 139, 178, 180. In the Dolpo manuscripts there is even a two-armed form of Prajñāpāramitā holding a sword and a book only, and thus taking over the iconography of Mañjuśrī (Ibid., figs. 93, 94).

18.For the image of Kyangbu see, for example, Erberto F. Lo Bue, Tibet - Templi Scomparsi Fotografati da Fosco Maraini (Torino: Ananke, 1998), 35, or von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, 848, fig. XIII-24.

19.See HAR, no. 68876. A bronze of a standing goddess documented at Kyangbu either represent Prajñāpāramitā, as proposed in von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, 80–81, fig. II-12, or a four armed form of Tārā holding a book, as it also occurs at Alchi.

20.See, for example, Ibid., no. 261E.

21.See Ibid., no. 96E-F. Two other bronzes of the goddess are of similar iconography, but perform the gesture of reassurance (abhayamudrā) with the upper right hand (Ibid., nos. 297B and 299A). Of these, the standing image 297B is accompanied by six meditating Buddhas.

22.Another tsha tsha made of the same mould has been published in Han Shuli, Xizang Yi Shu Ji Cui (Tibetan Arts) (Taibei Shi: Yi shu jia chu ban she, 1995), 201.

23.This unusual attribute reminds of the ringed mace of Viṣṇu, which also occurs in the Alchi paintings. See Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 61, 92, but in both cases this detail is barely visible in the published photos.

24.See Giuseppe Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, 3 vols. (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), pl. C.

25.On this structure and the deities represented in it see Robert N. Linrothe, "The Murals of Mangyu: A Distillation of Mature Esoteric Buddhist Iconography," Orientations 25, no. 11 (1994): 92–102; Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, 170–174, and Peter van Ham, Heavenly Himalayas. The Murals of Mangyu and Other Discoveries in Ladakh (Munich: Prestel, 2010).

26.The depiction of this goddess is severely damaged and thus not reproduced here.

27.See Roger Goepper, "Clues for a Dating of the Three-Storeyed Temple (Sumtsek) in Alchi, Ladakh," Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde / Études Asiatiques: Revue de la Société Suisse d' Études Asiatiques 44, no. 2 (1990): 159–175.

28.This argument has first been detailed in Christian Luczanits, "Art-Historical Aspects of Dating Tibetan Art," in Dating Tibetan Art. Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology From the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne, ed. Ingrid Kreide-Damani, Contributions to Tibetan Studies

(Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003), and repeated with slight amendments in Christian Luczanits, "Siddhas, Hierarchs, and Lineages: Three Examples for Dating Tibetan Art," in Mirror of the Buddha, Early Portraits From Tibet, ed. David Paul Jackson, Masterworks of Tibetan Painting Series (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2011).

29.See David L. Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski, The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, 1. Central Ladakh (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977); David L. Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski, The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, 2. Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1980).

30.Roger Goepper, "More Evidence for Dating the Sumtsek in Alchi and Its Relations With Kashmir," in Dating Tibetan Art. Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology From the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne, ed. Ingrid Kreide-Damani, Contributions to Tibetan Studies 3 (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003).

31.See in particular Christian Luczanits, "Alchi and the Drigungpa School of Tibetan Buddhism: The Teacher Depiction in the Small Chörten at Alchi," in Mei Shou Wan Nian - Long Life Without End. Festschrift in Honor of Roger Goepper, ed. Jeonghee Lee-Kalisch, Antje Papist-Matsuo, and Willibald Veit, (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2006).

32.This has been the subject of my more recent contribution to a Rubin Museum catalogue focused on Drigung School art (Christian Luczanits, "Beneficial to See: Early Drigung Painting," in Painting Traditions of the Drigung Kagyu School, ed. David P. Jackson, (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2014) expanding on an earlier short study Christian Luczanits, "A First Glance At Early Drigungpa Painting," in Studies in Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art. Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology & Art, Beijing, September 3-6, 2004, ed. Xie Jisheng, Shen Weirong, and Liao Yang, The Monograph Series in Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies (Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2006).

33.This chronology has been detailed in Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay. So far the chronology suggested in this work has not been contradicted through a reinterpretation of the presented evidence or new finds.

34.See Pratapaditya Pal, "Painting in Ancient Kashmir (600–1200)," in The Arts of Kashmir, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, (Milan, New York: 5 Continents, Asia Society, 2007). In this publication the Alchi murals are used to bridge the gap to Mughal period painting, and thus the early 13th century date for Alchi is accepted (Pratapaditya Pal, "Painting and Calligraphy (1200–1900)," in The Arts of Kashmir, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, (Milan, New York: 5 Continents, Asia Society, 2007), p. 147–49).

35.This exchange is outlined in Christian Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style," in Collecting Paradise. Buddhist Art of Kashmir and Its Legacies, ed. Rob Linrothe, (New York & Evanston: Rubin Museum of Art and Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2014).

36.There is also an inscription in an Indic script in the Avalokiteśvara niche that could not be deciphered so far.

37.See Goepper and Poncar, Alchi and also the dedicated studies Barry Finbarr Flood, "Mobility and Mutation: Iranian Hunting Themes in the Murals of Alchi, Western Himalayas," South Asian Studies 7, (1991): 21–35; and Roger Goepper, "Early Kashmir Textiles? Painted Ceilings in Alchi," Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society Vol. 56, no. 1991-92 (1993): 47-74; Roger Goepper, "Dressing the Temple. Textile Representations in the Frescoes at

Alchi," Asian Art. The Second Hali Annual (1995): 100-117. In a newer work Finbarr B. Flood, Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) offers a more detailed look on the dress of nobles as depicted at Alchi.

38.See also Pratapaditya Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1975), no. 96; Reedy, Himalayan Bronzes, K83; and Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style," fig. 2.46.

39.See Jean Naudou, Buddhists of Kaśmīr, (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1980), in particular chapter 7.

40.Examples for the first half of the 12th century are king Uccala's reconstruction and restoration efforts or the foundation of monuments by the queens Sussalā and Ratnadevī (see Marc Aurel Stein, Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṇgiṇī, a Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr, 2 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1900 (repr. 1989), II, 7, 21, 187–190).

41.von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, no. 54A–C.

42.See also "Tibet – Klöster Öffnen Ihre Schatzkammern," no. 36, where the bronze is attributed to the late 12th/early 13th century, and the description explicitly refers to Alchi.

43.This refers to the artistically closely connected temples of Alchi, Mangyu and Sumda Chung.

44.See also Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 96–101.

45.See Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, 148–154.

56.Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, no. 90; Vishwa Chander Ohri, "Hill Bronzes From the Chamba Area," in The Great Tradition. Indian Bronze Masterpieces, ed. Karl J. Khandalavala, Asha Rani Mathur, and Sonya Singh, (New Delhi: Brijbasi, 1988), fig. 12.

47.Kurukullā, Los Angeles County Museum of Art: see http://collections.lacma.org/node/252358 or Pratapaditya Pal, Indian Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1988), no. 25; Pratapaditya Pal, "Metal Sculpture," in Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1989), fig. 19.

48.See also Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 64, 75, 80, 81, 84, 85, 156, 157, 158, 203. In other, less frequent cases, goddesses may also have a third eye.

49.See Ibid., 80 and 85.

50.For depictions of this six-armed Avalokiteśvara flanked by goddesses with a dedication inscription during the reign of Queen Diḍḍā (980–1003), Kashmir, 989 CE; Bronze, H. 9 5/6 in. (25 cm), Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, see, for example, Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, no. 51; Pratapaditya Pal, "Bronzes of Kashmir," in The Great Tradition. Indian Bronze Masterpieces, ed. Karl J. Khandalavala, Asha Rani Mathur, and Sonya Singh, (New Delhi: Brijbasi, 1988), fig. 7; Pal, "Metal Sculpture," fig. 3; Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style," fig. 2.5.

51.See, for example, Phuntsok Namgyal, ed., Tuolin Si (Ntho-Ling Monastery), (Zhongguo Dabaike (Encyclopedia of China Publishing House), 2001), 131; Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, fig. 242; Amy Heller, "Preliminary Remarks on the Donor Inscriptions and Iconography of an 11th-Century mchod rten at Tholing," in Tibetan Art and Architecture in Context. Piats 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006, ed. Erberto F. Lo Bue and Christian Luczanits, Beiträge zur

Zentralasienforschung (Halle (Saale): International Institute for Tibetan Studies, 2010), fig. 9; Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style," fig. 2.7.

52.Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, fig. 65, and Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet" fig. 2.9.

53.For the two-armed Tārā with the wreath to the left of the main image see Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 72, 80.

54.See Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, fig. 154.

55.For another views of this goddess see also Ibid., fig. 153, 156.

56.On the iconography of this Tārā see Eva Allinger, "The Green Tara as Saviouress From the Eight Dangers in the Sumtseg at Alchi," Orientations 30, no. 1 (1999): 40–44.

57.See Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, no. 68. With regard to Alchi the central image of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, Goepper and Poncar, Alchi, 127, preserves most details.

58.Double lotus basis with petals of this shape are rather rare in bronzes. For examples see Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, nos. 57, 62, von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, no. 51C.

59.See Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, figs. 154.

60.See Ibid., figs. 161, 162, 165.

61.For example, Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, nos. 59, 60., von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, nos. 21, 22, 23C-E; Pal, The Arts of Kashmir, figs. 60, 91, 96, 97.

62.See, for example, the impressive halo of a Viṣṇu image featuring his manifestations (Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, no. 11, Pal, "Bronzes of Kashmir," figs. 12–14, Pal, "Metal Sculpture," figs. 14, 15) and smaller halos (Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, no. 44, Pratapaditya Pal, Himalayas. An Aesthetic Adventure (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago in association with the University of California Press and Mapin Publishing, 2003), nos. 71, 79).

63.See in particular the Asia Society bronze from the Palola ṣāhi kingdom and dated 714 CE Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir, 30; Pal, "Bronzes of Kashmir," fig. 3; Pal, Himalayas, no. 63, and Tu Xiang Yu Feng Ge : Gu Gong Zang Chuan Fo Jiao Zao Xiang / Iconography and Styles, Tibetan Statues in the Palace Museum, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zi jin cheng chu ban she, 2002), no. 79. A fragmentary version of such a composition is preserved at Matho monastery in Ladakh.

64.See in particular Luczanits, Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, 256–259.

65.See, for example, Nihar Ranjan Ray, Karl Khandalavala, and Sadashiv Gorakshkar, Eastern Indian Bronzes (New Delhi: Lalit Kalā Akademi, 1986), nos. 232, 233, 281; Amy Heller, Tibetan Art. Tracing the Development of Spiritual Ideals and Art in Tibet 600–2000 a.d. (Milano: Jaca Book, 1999), 39; von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, 84C, 87A, 87B, 88A-D, 89A, 105B.

66.See, for example, Ray, Khandalavala, and Gorakshkar, Eastern Indian Bronzes, nos. 312; von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, 120C, 121C, 122A-D, 123A-B, 129–131.

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